

HISTORY OF THE ABIPONES.

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sions of a cheerful disposition, fair complexion, ¹⁶⁴⁴ and less advanced period of life, underwent little trouble and danger from this disease. The burning of the throat, occasioned by the small-pox breaking out there, together with the cough and sort of quinsy it produces, are highly dangerous, and frequently fatal to the Indians. Water, mixed with sugar and citron-¹⁰⁰ juice, is very refreshing to persons afflicted in this manner; a decoction of plantane leaves is also of use to rinse the throat, and sometimes for the purpose of washing the eyes. The old physicians advised persons in the small-pox to stay within doors, and keep themselves well covered, lest the spots which are ready to come out should be repressed to the inward parts. The Abipones, on the contrary, ⁷⁵⁸ after taking the small-pox, passed days and nights in the open air, or in huts half closed, and admitting the air on every side. Whilst flying to the recesses of the woods they received the cold air into their whole bodies: might not this be the reason why, out of so great a number of sick persons, so very few died of the small-pox? For I have since learnt that modern physicians think the open air wholesomer for persons in the small-pox than the heat of a room; therefore I now no longer wonder at this disease proving fatal to so many

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GUARANI SH4

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A thousands of Guaranies, who, after being seized
 6 with it, always lie near the fire in a close room,
 758 almost smothered with blankets, and would
 have thought it fatally dangerous to breathe
 A the fresh air even for a moment. The habits
 758 of the Abipones, in time of small-pox, were
 totally opposite, and it seldomer proved fatal
 to them. To corroborate this assertion I will
 relate an event worthy the consideration and
 wonder of physicians.

[273] One of my Abipones, who was burning with
 feverish heat, the forerunner of small-pox, se-
 cretly procured a horn full of brandy which he
 drank to the last drop. Mounting his horse, in
 a state of complete intoxication, he swam
 across a river in the night, and arrived in safety
 at a plain, three miles and a half distant, where
 his fellow-hordesmen were dwelling, for fear of
 the contagion. When informed of these things,
 I was in great apprehension of the immediate
 death of the imprudent savage, and flew to
 succour both his soul and body. Unexpectedly
 good news were announced: that same night
 the small-pox broke out upon him, neither thick
 nor malignant. In a very few days he reco-
 vered, and was at liberty to ride where he
 liked. He was about thirty years old, of a
 lively temper, strong constitution, and high
 fame amongst his countrymen, for the number
 OF SPANIARDS HE HAD SLAIN.

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756 stored him to health, and gained me the repu-
797 tation of a physician amongst the Abipones.
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[123] Nothing will procure you the good-will of the
savages so soon as skill in the healing art. They
think that he who understands the natures and
remedies of diseases can be ignorant of nothing.
They will believe him in matters of religion,
and be tractable and obedient to him. Our
Saviour himself inspired mortals with wonder,
by healing bodies as well as souls. In imitation
of him, when we were employed in the instruc-
tion of the savages, we endeavoured to supply
the want of physicians, surgeons, and druggists,
by easily obtained remedies, by reading medi-
cal books, and by other means, in order to wean
that miserable people from their jugglers, whom
we accounted the chief obstacles to the propa-
gation of the holy religion.

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758 It is incredible how well the sick are taken
797 care of in the Guarany towns. Indians are ap-
pointed to attend upon them, more or fewer,
according to the number of inhabitants. These
men have some knowledge of herbs and com-
mon remedies, though they are not allowed to
use any medicine without consulting the mis-
sionary. They carry in their hands a staff
marked with a cross, and are hence called cross-
bearers. It is their business to go about dawn
to visit the sick in the district appointed to

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each, and to enquire whether any one has fallen ill lately. In the evening they make their report to the missionary in the presence of all, before he performs divine service, and are informed by him what remedies are to be used and what sacraments administered to each. At mid-day boiled meat with the best wheat bread is sent from his kitchen to the houses of all the sick, which are sometimes thirty, more or less, in number. All the sick are visited once every day, and sometimes oftener, by the missionary, accompanied by two boys. In short we never suffered any thing of use to the minds or bodies of the sick to be wanting. Moreover there resided amongst the Guaranies two or three lay-brothers of our order, European surgeons, tolerably skilled in the art of medicine; but on account of the great distance of the towns from one another, they were not always at hand to offer their assistance when it was needed.

Upon us, therefore, whose proper business it was to attend upon the minds of the sick, devolved the care of healing their bodies. We always ascribed it to the mercy of God when trifling remedies banished great diseases, for we had but a very scanty store of drugs. How useful to the sick in various ways were sulphur, alum, salt, tobacco, sugar, pepper, the fat of hens, tigers, oxen, sheep, &c. and gun-powder! scarco